

4. THE HARIDASA MOVEMENT: PURANDARADASA

ANOTHER movement that has played a great part in moulding the culture of the Karnataka is the Haridasa movement. The twelfth century seems to have been a time of spiritual upheaval in South India.

Ramanujacharya who systematised southern Vaishnavism did his work in the Tamil and Karnatak countries a little before the beginning and in the earlier years of that century. Basavanna led the Virasaiva movement in the Karnatak shortly after this. Not long after came Madliwacharya in western Karnatak.

While various classes dissatisfied with existing social conditions and religious institutions could throw in their lot with reformers like Basavanna, there must have been a great mass of people to whom also change seemed desirable, but who were not prepared to leave the pale of orthodoxy for getting it. Movements therefore arose which slackened the bonds of social custom and religious ceremonial without asking people to go outside the bounds of orthodoxy. The Haridasa movement was the Karnatak analogue of such movements.

Like all movements which have tried to take religion to the common people, the Haridasa movement laid stress upon the devotional aspect of religion and relied upon the vernacular for carrying on its propaganda.

ganda. It also developed an order of
preachers called
* Haridasas/ meaning servants of Hari or
Vishnu, the
highest idea of godhead as they conceived
it. These
people received initiation from a teacher in
the main
tenets of their creed, the substance of
which was that